

## **Assembly Joint Resolution No. 17**

### **RESOLUTION CHAPTER 77**

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 17—Relative to persons with disabilities.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 19, 1999.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

AJR 17, Aroner. Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999.

This measure would urge the United States Congress to pass the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 in order to meet the urgent demands of people with disabilities who work or want to work across the nation.

WHEREAS, In California and elsewhere, throughout a prolonged period of economic well-being and record low unemployment rates, recent national and California studies both have unacceptable findings that only one-third of adults with disabilities nationally and in California hold part-time or full-time jobs; and

WHEREAS, In these same studies, 75 percent of those not working stated they want to work; and

WHEREAS, The lack of access to private health insurance or the lack of continuing access to Medi-Cal or Medicare is the main obstacle individuals with significant disabilities face when working or returning to work; and

WHEREAS, The Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) work incentive rules have the potential to be effective but are underutilized, overly complex, and inconsistently administered. Social Security work incentives are used by only a small fraction of those eligible and often result in benefit overpayments that must be repaid by the payee; and

WHEREAS, People with disabilities who are SSDI beneficiaries and SSI recipients have limited choice in employment services; and

WHEREAS, On January 28, 1999, Senator James M. Jeffords, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Senator William V. Roth, Jr., and Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, introduced Senate Bill 331, cited as the "Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999," to expand the availability of health care coverage for working individuals with disabilities, establish a Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program in the Social Security Administration to provide these individuals with meaningful opportunities to work, and for other purposes; and

WHEREAS, On March 18, 1999, Representative Rick A. Lazio, Representative Michael Bilirakis, Representative Nancy L. Johnson, Representative Henry A. Waxman, Representative Tom Bliley, Jr.,

Representative Bob Matsui, Representative Fortney (Pete) Stark, Representative Brian Bilbray, Representative Steve Horn, of California and other states, introduced House Resolution 1180, cited as the “Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999,” a measure similar to that introduced in the Senate; and

WHEREAS, The federal act, as introduced, would provide states with the option and incentive grants to set up programs to extend medicaid coverage to certain classes of SSDI and SSI beneficiaries who work, extend Medicare for SSDI beneficiaries who work, provide more choice of employment services, and establish a \$2 for \$1 earned income offset demonstration project for SSDI beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, The federal act, as introduced, contains strong work incentive and planning provisions for individuals with disabilities who work or want to work, and provisions for community work incentive planners to help individuals understand and use federal and state work incentive programs, Social Security specialists in work incentives at field offices to disseminate accurate information, protection and advocacy assistance when an individual’s situation is negatively impacted as a result of work, and an advisory panel to counsel the Commissioner of Social Security and other federal agencies on employment and work incentive programs; and

WHEREAS, The interconnected provisions of the federal act work in concert to remove work barriers for people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Californians with disabilities want to live and work side by side with others in their communities and this goal can begin to happen with passage of this historic national legislation; and

WHEREAS, It is the California Legislature’s strongest belief that people have the responsibility and right to meaningful employment opportunities; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly and Senate of the State of California, jointly,* That the Legislature affirms its endorsement of the federal “Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999,” and urges the United States Congress to pass this act at once in order to meet the urgent demands of people with disabilities who work or want to work across the nation; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, the Senate Majority Leader, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairpersons of the Senate Committees on Appropriations, Budget, and Finance, and to the Chairpersons of the House Committees on Appropriations, Budget, Commerce, and Ways and Means, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.

